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# SIX HUNDRED DAYS

A REAPPRAISAL  
OF THE ARAB-ISRAELI CONFRONTATION  
SINCE JUNE, 1967

By  
HOWARD KOCH, JR.

A Memorial Issued by the Permanent  
Observer of the League of Arab  
States to the United Nations

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## PREFACE

TWENTY months have elapsed since June 1967. From our limited perspective in the vortex of the crisis, we have, hopefully, graduated to a more complete command of the minutiae of those troubled days, both in their immediate and in their historical contexts. This appreciation has been given heightened definition by the march of events following the outbreak of hostilities.

The present study is an attempt to probe the limits of Israeli credibility in its various undertakings in the six hundred days since 5 June 1967. It was initiated out of a conviction that we should, indeed must, have a more careful appraisal of Israel's role along the various dimensions of the Palestine Question—as it is in reality, and as it is explained to anxious spectators abroad. In short, we propose to match concrete acts with the spoken word.

This is, admittedly, a reflection of an Arab position—all the more important, perhaps, because an Arab position *exists* and has merit that often goes unrecognized. We have, however, endeavored to maintain objectivity and to avoid the polemics so common to emotionally-charged issues. The study is to be considered by no means exhaustive, although considerable care has been taken to draw together all of the necessary and relevant documentation, much of it Israeli in origin. Extensive use has also been made of the records of the United Nations, together with the personal memoirs of those who served in agencies (such as UNTSO) of the Organization.

It is hoped that the present Memorial will contribute to the placing of this latest phase of the Arab-Israeli confrontation in somewhat sharper profile, and bring a deeper understanding to a tragedy of enormous proportions.



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## Chapter I

# THE RHETORIC OF POLITICAL OPPORTUNISM



*We have no invasion plans. Our only target is to foil the Arab armies' aim of invading our country.*

(GENERAL MOSHE DAYAN, 5 June 1967)<sup>1</sup>

*People abroad must realize that with all the strategic importance to Israel of Sinai, the Golan Heights, and the Tiran Straits—the mountain range west of the Jordan lies at the heart of Jewish history . . . If you have the Book of the Bible, and the People of the Book, then you also have the Land of the Bible—of the Judges and of the Patriarchs in Jerusalem, Hebron, Jericho and thereabouts.*

*. . . On no account will we force ourselves to leave [the Hebron] . . . This may not be a political program, but it is more important—it is the fulfillment of a people's ancestral dreams.*

(GENERAL MOSHE DAYAN, 10 August 1967)<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Jerusalem Israel Domestic Service (in Hebrew), 0837 hours GMT, 5 June 1967.

<sup>2</sup>As summarized in *The Jerusalem Post*, 10 August 1967, p. 1.



At 0600 hours (Cairo time) on the 5th of June, 1967, aircraft of the Israeli airforce struck a series of massive blows at airbases throughout the territory of the United Arab Republic, followed a short time later by similar strikes against Jordanian, Syrian and Iraqi targets—in response to “. . . the Arab attempt to conquer our land and to suppress the blockade and belligerence mounted against us.”<sup>3</sup> The events which followed this painful moment in time are all too familiar. The preliminaries, however, deserve more than passing attention.

The initiative taken by Israel and the catastrophic happenings of that historic week in June were the culmination of a series of inconclusive meetings of the Israeli cabinet late in May, conducted in the shadow of the withdrawal of UNEF and the closing of the Gulf of Aqaba. War and diplomacy hung in the balance. Political cross-pressures notwithstanding, Prime Minister Levi Eshkol “was prepared to go to war” as early as the 27th of May, restrained only by President Lyndon B. Johnson’s urgent communication of that date, asking for a breathing spell—a request that was reiterated by a later communication from Secretary of State Dean Rusk.<sup>4</sup> Earlier on the same day, the Soviet Ambassador Chuvakhin had urged caution, drawing the Prime Minister’s attention to the consequences of abandoning the diplomatic realm for the military. The cabinet itself was evenly divided. The military argued for a decision and quietly reviewed its plans (see below, Chapter II) while other domestic pressures were welling up to a point where they were becoming irresistible. With General Dayan’s appointment to the cabinet as Minister of Defense on 1 June, subterranean emotions surfaced in patriotic demonstrations throughout the country. On Friday, 2 June, broadcasts sought to minimize military dangers to Israel in the event of an armed confrontation, while in the evening of that day the Minister of Labor, Yigal Allon, in uniform and present at a rally in Tel Aviv, spoke with what can only be regarded as remarkable candor: “There is not the slightest doubt about the outcome of this war, and each of its stages, and we are not forgetting the Jordanian and the Syrian fronts

<sup>3</sup> Israeli representative Gideon Rafael, quoting General Dayan’s message to the Israel Defense Forces, in the Security Council, 5 June 1967. S/PV.1347, p. 21.

<sup>4</sup> Theodore Draper, *Israel and World Politics: Roots of the Third Arab-Israeli War* (New York: Viking, 1967), p. 93.



either.”<sup>5</sup> Whatever ambivalence was felt by individual members of the cabinet about a war thus virtually proclaimed but as yet not officially approved, was resolved by the evening of 3 June, at a formal session of the cabinet in Tel Aviv. At that final—and fateful—meeting, a gathering sentiment for a military “resolution” overcame the vestiges of political resistance, and those present voted overwhelmingly to launch a preventive war against, in the first instance, the United Arab Republic, the time and place of which were left to Prime Minister Eshkol and Defense Minister Moshe Dayan.<sup>6</sup> From this point, decision-making resided, for all practical purposes, with the “experts.”<sup>7</sup> The time chosen was dawn, 5 June, subject only to military considerations.

On Monday morning, 5 June, as Israeli aircraft carried out their assignments with almost fantastic precision, Prime Minister Eshkol addressed the nation. War had come, thrust, he said, upon a people whose only aspiration was “to live without the sword of aggression hanging over its head.”<sup>8</sup>

Israeli citizens: Since the early hours today our armed forces on the land and in the air have been repulsing the attack of the aggressive Egyptian forces. Egypt has imposed a military battle on us. The army and the people will stand firm. . . . We have

<sup>5</sup> *Ha'aretz*, 4 June 1967.

<sup>6</sup> Walter Laqueur, in his book, *The Road To Jerusalem: The Origins of the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, 1967 (New York: Macmillan, 1968), p. 158, emphasizes the casual character of the meeting which, he asserts, lacked the formality of a vote. His version, also, places the session on 4 June. The evidence is, however, rather to the contrary as conceded by Israelis interviewed after the event. See, for example, *The New York Times*, 6, 8 and 10 June 1967; also Draper, *op. cit.*, p. 110; and David Kimche and Dan Bawly, *The Sandstorm—The Arab-Israeli War of 1967* (New York: Stein and Day, 1968), p. 155, the latter placing the meeting in the morning of 4 June. This is consistent with Draper's version inasmuch as the session extended well past midnight.

<sup>7</sup> It has been a characteristic of the Israeli political process that the military sector competes, in a sense, with the civilian in the definition of goals, priorities and means. The military-civilian dichotomy is qualified by a “generation gap” which leaves younger Israelis with a lingering distrust for, and impatience with, some of the older political figures still on the scene. This was particularly noticeable in the period preceding the June war. David Kimche, correspondent and sometime member of the Israeli Foreign Ministry, writes of the mood then prevalent: “The impatience of those who felt that rapid action was essential had now [the last week in May] reached its climactic. The military knew that each day that passed would increase their casualty rate. In the eyes of the militants, Israel was being held back by a group of elderly men who did not know how to make up their minds.” Kimche and Bawly, *op. cit.*, p. 148. This sense of frustration became more pervasive as time passed. Even Foreign Minister Eban was not exempt from harsh criticism. “They [the members of the Ahdut Ha'avoda coalition] had become increasingly annoyed with Eban, who they believed had allowed his zeal for peace to impede his judgment.” *Ibid.*, p. 151.

<sup>8</sup> Jerusalem Israel Domestic Service (in Hebrew), 1000 hours GMT, 5 June 1967.

the power to foil the designs of the attacker. Israel seeks peace. It defends peace. . . . Our only aim is to rid our borders of every threat of sabotage and every danger of aggression.”<sup>9</sup>

In New York at 0310 and 0330 hours respectively, the representatives of Israel and the United Arab Republic informed the President of the Security Council of the outbreak of hostilities. The Security Council, which had been meeting regularly on the deteriorating situation in the Middle East, was called into urgent session. The representative of Israel, Mr. Rafael, informed the Council that fragmentary reports just received indicated that “fighting had erupted on Israel's frontiers.” He continued:—

I have so far received only first reports about the developments. From these it is evident that in the early hours of this morning Egyptian armoured columns moved in an offensive thrust against Israel's borders. At the same time Egyptian planes took off from airfields in Sinai and struck out towards Israel. Egyptian artillery in the Gaza Strip shelled the Israel villages of Kissufim, Nahal-Oz and Ein Hashelosh. Netania and Kefar Yavetz have also been bombed. Israel forces engaged the Egyptians in the air and on land, and fighting is still going on.<sup>10</sup>

Mr. Rafael concluded by quoting Defense Minister Dayan's message already alluded to: “We have no plans of conquest . . . . We are a small but brave people. We want peace but we are ready to fight for our land and our lives.”<sup>11</sup> A vivid picture: a nation seeking, without success, a redress of grievances, harboring no aggressive designs, encircled and threatened by overwhelming power, animated only by its passion for survival, and desiring with respect to its adversaries “neither to violate either their security, or their territory.”<sup>12</sup> The next day, 6 June, Abba Eban arrived in New York to spell out in the Security Council the anatomy of Arab aggression—“a systematic, overt, proclaimed design at politicide, the murder of a state.”<sup>13</sup>

In short, there was peril for Israel wherever it looked. Its manpower had been hastily mobilized. Its economy and commerce were beating with feeble pulses. Its streets were dark and empty.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>10</sup> S/PV.1347 (5 June 1967), p. 20.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 21.

<sup>12</sup> Gideon Rafael, quoting a speech of Prime Minister Eshkol in the Knesset on 22 May. Letter dated 22 May, 1967 from the representative of Israel to the President of the Security Council. S/7901. *Security Council Official Records*, Supplement for April-June, 1967, p. 118.

<sup>13</sup> Foreign Minister Eban, 6 June 1967. S/PV.1348, p. 72.



There was an apocalyptic air of approaching peril. And Israel faced this danger alone.

Now there could be no doubt about what was intended for us. With my very own ears I heard President Nasser's speech on 26 May.

He said:

"We intend to open a general assault against Israel. This will be total war. . . ."<sup>14</sup>

Parenthetically, for reasons that will be taken up in Chapter II, the passage of President Nasser's speech quoted by the Foreign Minister should be read as follows:

The problem today is not just Israel, but also those behind it. *If Israel embarks on an aggression against Syria or Egypt* the battle against Israel will be a general one and not confined to one spot on the Syrian or Egyptian borders. . . .<sup>15</sup>

The central assumption underlying all authoritative statements by responsible Israeli leaders, and their representatives in the United Nations, during the early days of the war was that Israel *had been* attacked by land and air by units of the armed forces of the United Arab Republic. This starting assumption was, in the course of time, to undergo two significant modifications: 1) that Israel was about to be attacked, justifying preemptive action; and, 2) that war had in fact begun with the withdrawal of UNEF and the closing of the entrance to the Gulf of Aqaba, and with the concentration of Egyptian forces in the Sinai, and that Israeli action was only an extension of a war-in-being.<sup>16</sup> From this assumption, with or without its various permutations, flowed the

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>15</sup> Italics supplied. Speech of President Nasser, 26 May 1967, to the Central Council of Arab Trade Unions, broadcast the same day on Voice of the Arabs (Cairo), (to the Arab World), 1935 hours GMT. Nasser's speech of 26 May was further embellished and rearranged with the customary omissions in a subsequent statement by Israeli alternate representative Mordechai Kidron in the Security Council on 13 June. S/PV.1358, p. 102.

The theme of Arab *second-strike* preparedness was dominant in Arab pre-war statements. See, for example, the text of President Nasser's press conference of 28 May 1967, broadcast over Cairo Domestic Service (in Arabic) 1450 hours GMT.

<sup>16</sup> The first modification became a necessity when the preemptive character of the Sinai campaign could no longer be concealed or masked by euphemisms. The second became appropriate when arguing the inapplicability of all or any arrangements—territorial or otherwise—existing prior to the outbreak of hostilities. In the unrewarding months of debates that followed, the latter assumption became a key to Israeli policy and an anchorstone in its rebuttals to hostile criticism and unwanted proposals. The rejection of the *status quo ante bellum* was equated with the ending of two decades of unsettled conditions along the armistice lines, thus broadening the definition of aggression in temporal terms. Israel, thus freed, at least in its own eyes, of pre-June constraints on independent action and "innova-

hard substance of Israeli representations abroad, upon which was erected, for the future, a "concrete vision of peace" (see p. 11, footnote 16): first that Israeli involvement in the events of the week of 5 June constituted an act of self-defense, consistent with Article 51 of the United Nations Charter; second, that Israeli actions in pursuit of these limited objectives in no way envisaged the acquisition of additional territories; and, finally, that Israeli attempts to find succor within the frame of the United Nations, to "exhaust every prospect, however fragile, of a diplomatic solution" failed, as they had in the past, to secure their vital interests and security from molestation.<sup>17</sup>

These are serious assertions, and inevitably they loom large in any careful consideration of Israeli representations, attitudes, policies and actions in the eighteen months that have lapsed since the June war. The evidence that has accumulated in this protracted period, including the sobering fact that during these eighteen months not a single United Nations resolution has been implemented by the Government of Israel,

tion" could entertain a fresh array of options, embracing, in the words of Abba Eban, a "concrete vision of peace" with new terms of reference. S/PV.1382 (22 November, 1967), p. 51. This extension of the area of debate found frequent expression. In the General Assembly, Foreign Minister Eban: "The Arab Governments have had nothing so far to suggest except a return to the situation which prevailed on 4 June. This we cannot accept. . . . Our road does not lead backward to an armistice eroded by belligerency, destroyed by blockade, undermined by guerilla war, and corrupted by the avowed contempt of our sovereignty. History summons us forward to a new spirit and structure of relations, for which there is no word but peace." A/PV.1566 (25 September 1967), p. 58. Again: "In short, the 1949 agreements, which should have been succeeded by peace treaties in 1950, had become by 1967 a formula for belligerency. . . . They cannot be rebuilt. . . ." A/PV.1577 (3 October 1967), p. 71. In the Security Council, roughly a week preceding the United Kingdom resolution calling for, among other things, the unqualified withdrawal of Israeli forces from the occupied territories: "If you ignore our memories, you cannot understand our policy. That policy can be expressed in a single sentence. It is our firm resolve never, never to return to the danger and vulnerability from which we have emerged. This resolve must prevail over every other consideration. To avoid a return to any of the conditions which prevailed on 4 June is a supreme national purpose worthy of any effort and any consequence." S/PV.1375 (13 November 1967), pp. 11-12. The United Kingdom-sponsored resolution of 22 November 1967 (S/8247), adopted unanimously by the Security Council, was received by Israel as follows: "The policy of the Israeli Government and nation remains as it was when I [Eban] formulated it on 13 and 16 November, namely that we respect and fully maintain the situation embodied in the cease-fire agreements until it is succeeded by peace treaties. . . . Those are our aims and positions. They emerge from five months of international discussion unchanged, unprejudiced and intact. It is now understood as axiomatic that movement from the cease-fire lines can be envisaged only in the framework of a lasting peace establishing recognized and secure boundaries." S/PV.1382 (22 November 1967), pp. 46-47. Mr. Eban's interpretation of the resolution was sharply questioned by other representatives at the meeting. At this writing, the resolution's request for withdrawal has not been implemented.

<sup>17</sup> Foreign Minister Eban, 6 June 1967. S/PV.1348, p. 73.



raises questions of the utmost severity with respect to Israeli credibility in its various undertakings in the international community, both within and outside the United Nations.

There is a disarming simplicity—long evident in Israeli portrayals of their mutual relations with the Arabs—to the evaluations and derivative conclusions, and the solutions which flow from them, reached by the Government of Israel as it surveys its environment. Cause and effect become obscured, and somehow the point is missed that no issue approaches the Palestine Question in occupying the attention and concern of the United Nations in its dual role of forum and, through such agencies as UNTSO and UNEF, active participant in this deadly encounter. Ambiguity is never pleasant; there is certain relief in simplicity. It is, however, unfortunately a matter of indisputable fact that the present crisis defies any simplistic definition. Quite apart from its long history as a Zionist-Arab confrontation during the British mandatory administration and the continuation of that confrontation during the twenty years of uneasy armistice, the Palestine Question in its present configuration has a complicated life-cycle of its own. But it is just as true, in a broader historical context, that the events of June 1967 did not originate with the inflammatory statements of General Rabin and Prime Minister Eshkol (on May 11 and 13 respectively),<sup>18</sup> nor with the well-documented paramilitary activity in the demilitarized zones, nor with the intelligence reports of Israeli mobilization in the North against Syria, nor with the withdrawal of UNEF or the closing of the Straits of Tiran, nor even with the concentration of opposing forces in the Sinai. In this context, we recognize that this situation, like all those which preceded it, was generated by other situations which, in turn, provides moments of opportunity for those who wish to capitalize upon them. The complexities of this kind of confrontation places peace, or at least Ambassador Eban's "vision" of it, beyond reach, and under such circumstances occasional hostilities are endemic to the situation.

Nonetheless, the history of the armistice regimes is not one of unbroken warfare. Tensions and incidents abound, but major outbreaks

<sup>18</sup> Israeli comments were sufficiently provocative as to be noted in a report of the United Nations Secretary-General:

"Intemperate and bellicose utterances, by other officials and non-officials, eagerly reported by press and radio, are unfortunately more or less routine on both sides of the lines in the Near East. In recent weeks, however, reports emanating from Israel have attributed to some high officials in that State statements so threatening as to be particularly inflammatory in the sense that they could only heighten emotions and thereby increase tensions on the other side of the lines." S/7896 (19 May 1967).

are far fewer in number. With respect to the latter, regardless of their historical antecedents, it is possible to determine with some accuracy the perpetrator and the circumstances under which they occurred. The United Nations and its representatives in the field have had no little experience with violations of the armistice agreements, of which June 1967 constitutes an example on a truly Herculean scale. For the Israelis, their findings have made for some unpleasant moments.<sup>19</sup> The Israelis, in their turn, have responded with uncomplimentary references to the activities of UNTSO personnel, accusing them of "pseudo-objectivity" and rejecting their observations as being irrelevant to circumstances that they fail to comprehend.<sup>20</sup> Israeli attitudes towards UNTSO are matched by a general down-grading of the deliberations in United Nations bodies seized with the Palestine Question.<sup>21</sup> This was reflected in Foreign Minister Eban's observation on the eve of the June war that "the United Nations did nothing and tried very little" to avert the events of June 1967.<sup>22</sup> It is, and has been over time, reflected also in Israeli

<sup>19</sup> As reported to the Security Council by the Chief of Staff of UNTSO over the years, 24 attacks within Arab territories by units of Israeli regular forces resulted in formal censures by the Mixed Armistice Commissions. This is somewhat under the actual number of incursions recorded. In addition, six major violations considered by the Security Council resulted in censures. Since the signing of the armistice agreements, no complaint involving actions by Arab armed forces has been brought before any organ of the United Nations.

<sup>20</sup> Hebrew University of Jerusalem, *Israel and the United Nations* (New York: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1956) p. 291. This attitude is just as prevalent today. An Israeli editor noted, in the wake of the June war, that there was no enthusiasm for the assignment of U.N. personnel to the Suez Canal area "because of its past frustrating experience with U.N. observers." *Ha'aretz* editorial, broadcast over the Jerusalem Domestic Service (in Hebrew), 0500 hours GMT, 11 July 1967. Israeli animosity towards UNTSO is reciprocated, of which the writings of those who saw service bears evidence. See, for example, Elmo H. Hutchison, *Violent Truce: A Military Observer Looks at the Arab-Israeli Conflict, 1951-1955* (New York: Devin Adair, 1956); Lt. General E.L.M. Burns, *Between Arab and Israeli* (London: Harrap, 1962); and General Carl von Horn, *Soldiering for Peace* (London: Cassall, 1966). The latter summarizes his experience with UNTSO as follows: "What went wrong? I always had a talk with staff members who were leaving the Mission. Invariably it was the same story. Nearly all of them had arrived with the honest intention to help *both* parties to the Armistice Agreement, but with a conscious sympathy for the people of 'poor little Israel.' Yet, after two or three years in daily contact with officials, soldiers and private individuals on both sides, there had been a remarkable change in their attitude. I found it sad but very significant that when I asked them what their most negative experiences had been during their service with U.N.T.S.O. the reply was almost invariably: 'The consistent cheating and deception of the Israelis.'" *Ibid.*, p. 283.

<sup>21</sup> No other problem has invited so much attention as the Palestine perennial. As of 1966, no fewer than 985 meetings of the principal organs and main committees of the United Nations were given over to the subject, including 657 meetings of the General Assembly, 233 meetings of the Security Council, 12 of the Economic and Social Council and 82 of the Trusteeship Council.

<sup>22</sup> Press conference in Tel Aviv, broadcast over Jerusalem Israel Domestic Service (in Hebrew) 1400 hours GMT, 5 June 1967. General Dayan spoke in still more categorical terms: "I



public opinion which initially looked to the United Nations as an extension of its own limited means and, in this sense, for a kind of support not normally accorded to the Organization's membership. This not forthcoming, and with impressive majorities in opposition to Israeli representations in various U.N. organs, Israelis have increasingly pursued policies without regard for the approval or disapproval of the international community and have tended to equate a lack of sympathy with a form of institutional or moral bankruptcy.<sup>23</sup> Their highly selective implementation of United Nations resolutions provides further evidence of the Israelis' hardened resolve to keep their own counsel and, in the final analysis, look to their arms in the achievement of their goals.<sup>24</sup> In this one area, then, Israeli credibility is not open to question.

Only the magnitude of the June war sets it off from the other, all too numerous events of the past twenty years. There are remarkable continuities in Israel's part in the history of the Arab Middle East in the years since the Second World War, remarkable consistency. Explicit disrespect for the United Nations, acknowledgment of the legitimacy of warlike acts in the pursuit of national goals, a simplistic approach to the elaboration of regional complexities, and a marked separation of

don't really remember a single important problem that was solved through diplomacy or the United Nations mediation." Statement on "Face the Nation" 11 June 1967, pre-recorded in Tel Aviv 9 June 1967.

<sup>23</sup>In voicing these sentiments the Israelis have been quite explicit. In considering as inapplicable the Security Council resolution (262) condemning Israel for its attack on the International Airport at Beirut, Ambassador Tekoah commented: "The resolution reflects [the] moral, political and juridical bankruptcy of the Security Council in respect of the Middle East situation." S/PV.1462 (31 December 1968), p. 51. Israeli disenchantment with the U.N. has long been in evidence. As early as the mid-fifties: "the Israel public finds it very difficult to understand how it is that the different Arab spokesmen are allowed to go on treating audiences to this kind of performance without being called to book. This state of affairs, in which Israel has been thrown on the defensive, has led to inevitable reaction on the part of Israel opinion and as a cause for dismay and exasperation with the United Nations it must not be underestimated. This factor must be regarded as of primary importance in the development of the national attitude towards the Organization since Israel became a member." Hebrew University of Jerusalem, *op. cit.*, p. 61.

<sup>24</sup>In the words of Ambassador Tekoah, following adoption in the Security Council on 21 May 1968 of the draft resolution (S/8590/Rev.2) concerning the status of Jerusalem: "In the past I have had occasion to draw attention to the disabilities of the Security Council when it comes to deal with questions of the twenty-year Arab war against Israel. The resolution now adopted does not change or add to the known pattern of Security Council resolutions on the Middle East situation. It does add, however, to the determination of the people of Israel to gird themselves for even greater fortitude in the defence of their rights and the pursuit of peace and security, despite the malice of those who have injured us and despite injustice born in error." S/PV.1426, p. 46. This resolution, as have all resolutions concerning various Israeli policies and acts with respect to Jerusalem, went unheeded.

words from deeds—these have been some of the more conspicuous characteristics of Israeli behavior since it joined the family of nations.

These characteristics and the nature of Israeli representations in the eighteen months since the June war oblige us, as we have said earlier, to open to serious question the matter of Israeli credibility on several of the issues now outstanding. It is not a pleasant task to charge a government or its representatives with deliberate deception, but circumstances leave us with no alternative. In the United Nations, as elsewhere, truth is essential to the orderly consideration of problems. And truth is indivisible.



## *Chapter II*

# THE QUESTION OF AGGRESSION



*Sixteen years' planning had gone into those initial 80 minutes. We lived with the plan, we slept on the plan, we ate the plan. Constantly we perfected it.*

(BRIGADIER MORDICAI HOD, Commander  
of the Israeli Air Force, July 1967)<sup>25</sup>

<sup>25</sup>*The Sunday Times* (London), 16 July, 1967, p. 7.



It will remain one of the anomalies of the June War that doubts have been raised as to how it got started. Simply stated, who attacked whom? With Israeli aircraft over Egyptian targets in the early hours of 5 June, and with units of the Israeli armed forces moving into Sinai from areas of deployment, perhaps one of the most curious accusations of aggression in recent history was laid at the doorstep of the United Arab Republic.

The initial statements by Israeli spokesmen were straight forward enough. "Pre-emption" did not form part of their vocabulary then. Early reports indicated "that in the early hours of this morning Egyptian armored columns moved in an offensive thrust against Israel's borders. At the same time Egyptian planes took off from airfields in Sinai and struck out towards Israel."<sup>26</sup> This was denied by the representative of the United Arab Republic, who informed the President of the Security Council in the small hours of the morning of a massive Israeli attack, in the first instance by air.

Wars are never staged with the needs of their chroniclers in mind. Propaganda, the disruption of the usual channels of communication, the requirements of secrecy, and a normal bureaucratic "erosion" in terms of document-preservation—all conspire to make exceedingly difficult the piecing together of the historical mosaic. Nonetheless, despite all the confusions normally surrounding the sudden outbreak of extensive hostilities, we are, in fact, remarkably clear on the narrow and very specific question as to which party took the initiative on 5 June 1967. Widely disseminated eye-witness accounts and aerial photographs, combined with admittedly fragmentary reports from UNTSO and UNEF units still in the area, very early removed whatever doubts there were about the order of events. Documentation and interviews made available since June, and a plethora of detailed studies (albeit of highly uneven quality), have filled in the outline as it was perceived in the midst of the crisis.

The confusions, it would seem, arose primarily in diplomatic circles, away from the scene, and in the public mind conditioned (or, perhaps, more accurately preconditioned) by an enormous volume of information of dubious value. Much of the rhetoric heard in the initial deliberations

<sup>26</sup> Gideon Rafael, in the Security Council, 5 June, 1967. S/PV. 1347, p. 17.



within the United Nations had a strange air of unreality, as if several wars were concurrently under consideration.

There was, of course, only one war in the Middle East in June 1967. And among those with access to authoritative sources there is something approximating absolute consensus. The United Arab Republic was attacked by the airforce and armoured units of the Israel Defense Forces, at a moment when a pretext, any suitable pretext, could be found. Israel attacked, indeed *had* to attack, out of the harsh logic of warfare in the Sinai and the likelihood of an enlargement of the conflict.<sup>27</sup> The action had to be swift and decisive, less animated at that early stage by the acquisition of territories for bargaining purposes: "Instead, the destruction of the Egyptian army became the prime objective, and the accent in the plans was put on pushing into the Sinai as deeply as possible."<sup>28</sup> The order of battle was long predetermined:—

The armoured corps in 1956 represented a small fraction of the total; by 1967 this had risen to a significant percentage. More than half of the defence expenditure went into the airforce. Armour and airpower had become the two decisive factors. With the infantry more mobile it had no mean part to play. For Israeli thinking was governed by three basic premises: victory is assured to the side that obtains complete superiority in the air; armour should be used as a concentrated mailed fist to smash through the fortified positions of the enemy; once the breakthrough is achieved, the accent is on exploitation with maximum speed and flexibility.<sup>29</sup>

This doctrine, Kimche asserts, evolved out of existing conditions: 1) the terrain; 2) the character of Egyptian defenses; and 3) "the limitations of time created by outside intervention which, in Israeli eyes, made speed an essential factor in every plan."<sup>30</sup> To the military, this was the only doctrine which encompassed all the ingredients of success, both military and political, and while the Israeli cabinet continued its musings, the General Staff met to translate military theory into operational plans. On 2 June, Defense Minister Dayan met with Chief of Staff Rabin, Deputy Chief of Staff General Haim Barlev and others of the General Staff, and cut the orders: "... the attack, if and when it came, would be mounted

along three axes into Sinai, in the general direction of Bir Gifgafa and the Mitla Pass."<sup>31</sup> Air operations were to "attack concurrently seventeen airfields in pre-emptive strikes, destroying first the runways to prevent any aircraft from taking off, and then all aircraft in sight."<sup>32</sup>

In a memorable broadcast to the nation on 1 June 1967, Brigadier General Haim Herzog, Israel's main military spokesman at that time, spoke a few words of reassurance in anticipation of the troubling days ahead: "Knowing the facts, I can say that if I had a choice between sitting in an Egyptian aircraft sent to bomb Tel Aviv and sitting in a house in Tel Aviv, then I would prefer for the good of my health to sit in Tel Aviv."<sup>33</sup> In view of what followed, General Herzog's command of the facts cannot be disputed. By noon on 5 June, smoke could be seen rising from seventeen Egyptian airfields, and Israeli armour had commenced its three-prong advance into the vastness of Sinai.<sup>34</sup> By week's end, the first Israeli infantryman had been photographed wading waist-deep in the waters of the Suez Canal. That symbolic act, terminating for all practical purposes the Sinai campaign, found expression on the floor of the Security Council: "In accordance with its inherent right of self-defence as formulated in Article 51 of the United Nations Charter, Israel responded defensively in full strength. Never in the history of nations has armed force been used in a more righteous or compelling cause."<sup>35</sup>

With the question of Egyptian "aggression" thus disposed of, there remained other burning questions before the Security Council. The number of "aggressors" had suddenly increased. Israel was now heavily engaged on two new fronts. Foreign Minister Eban, speaking in the Council, told the members that "even when engaged with Egyptian forces, we still hoped to contain the conflict. Egypt was overtly bent on our destruction, but we still [hoped] that others would not join the aggression."<sup>36</sup> This, he said, was conveyed to the Jordanians.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 155.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 180-181.

<sup>33</sup> Laqueur, *op. cit.*, p. 156.

<sup>34</sup> Official confirmation came quickly. On 8 June Israeli Ambassador in London, Aharon Remez, stated without qualification: "It was Israel who had fired the first shot." UPI dispatches, London, 8 and 9 June, 1967. This statement was subsequently disowned by the Government of Israel.

<sup>35</sup> Foreign Minister Eban, in the Security Council, 6 June 1967. S/PV.1348, p. 73. Eban's remarks in the Council acquired a special poignancy in view of his later admission that he himself had given General Rabin "the 'green light' on Thursday (1 June) morning, after having carefully studied the latest dispatches from the U.S." *The Jerusalem Post*, 5 June 1968, p. 7.

<sup>36</sup> S/PV.1348 (6 June 1967), p. 73.

<sup>27</sup> It will be recalled (see above, p. 11-12) that Yigal Allon envisaged a war in which there would be Syrian and Jordanian fronts. This was not a parochial view.

<sup>28</sup> Kimche and Bawly, *op. cit.*, p. 174.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 173-174.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 174.



Nevertheless, Jordan decided to join the Egyptian posture against Israel and opened artillery attacks across the whole long frontier, including Jerusalem. Those attacks are still in progress. To the appeal of Prime Minister Eshkol to avoid any further extension of the conflict, Syria answered at 12:25 yesterday morning by bombing Megiddo from the air and bombing Deganya at 12:40 with artillery fire and kibbutz Ein Hamifrats and Koordani with long-range guns. But Jordan embarked on a much more total assault by artillery and aircraft along the entire front, with special emphasis on Jerusalem, to whose dangerous and noble ordeal yesterday I come to bear personal witness.<sup>37</sup>

Israelis, as we have already noted, considered as inevitable a two, or possibly three front war, should war come. The very importance of speed in the southern campaign had in part been rooted in the need for the release of troops for service elsewhere. This had been discussed in staff meetings and was known to the cabinet. Foreign Minister Eban's surprise at Jordan's involvement can, therefore, be attributed either to inattention or duplicity. It was also well known that the events of 1956 were not likely to be duplicated, for a variety of reasons, ten years later. For one thing, the arms balance, from an Arab point of view, had improved, although, as we shall see, not at levels (either in terms of total firepower, men under arms, or military proficiency) claimed by the Israelis. In short, combined Arab defense capabilities had sufficiently improved as to give themselves a greater measure of confidence in whatever formal defense arrangements were to be concluded. With the conclusion of the defense pact between Syria and the United Arab Republic in November 1966, and with the subsequent adherence of Jordan, it was, therefore, not only possible but nearly inevitable that any Israeli military initiative of a serious nature would involve the three Arab Governments jointly. Under the legal dictum of *pacta sunt servanda* it would have been just as inappropriate and unlikely for Jordan and Syria not to come to the assistance of the United Arab Republic as it would have been for the United Kingdom and France to abandon Poland to German invasion in 1939.

Again, that disarming simplicity to which we have become so accustomed: the war between Israel and Egypt is their affair alone; it is to be localized. The entrance of Jordan and Syria constitutes separate "aggressions" and the fact that they joined Egypt in accordance with the provisions of a defense pact transforms that agreement into "an aggres-

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 76.

sive pact."<sup>38</sup> Once again, we return to the words of Minister Allon (2 June 1967): "There is not the slightest doubt about the outcome of this war, and each of its stages, and we are not forgetting the Jordanian and Syrian fronts either."

Thus the question of initiative in the context of the June war is not subject to serious question, and the extension of the conflict followed as night follows day. What remains to be considered is why Israel unleashed its formidable military establishment in the first place. Clearly, it had not been attacked. But was it about to be?

The preemptive theme acquires weight—not to mention credibility—only if it rests on the reasonable assumption of the immediate threat of the use of armed force by a potential adversary. It is true beyond doubt that Arabs harbor little sympathy for Israel as a political entity and have only the greatest reservations about its "life-style" in the international community. Many have regarded, and do today regard, as being close to inevitable an ultimate collision between the parties. And the events of the past twenty years tend to suggest that that conclusion is not without validity. But this is not a startling thought to most Israelis, many of whom regard persistent Arab animosity as part of the price of statehood, and who see the occasional demonstration of Israeli power as a prophylactic gesture. Israelis, further, are aware of divisions in the Arab World. Y. Harkabi, long associated with Israeli Intelligence, has gone so far as to argue that "Israel is rarely alone in the boat, having the companionship of each of the Arab states in turn, illustrating the phenomenon of 'ennemis frères' or antagonistic cooperation."<sup>39</sup> Thus, over time, Israeli fear of an active Arab role, especially a role involving coordinated military measures, has been more feigned than real. The image of two and one half million Israelis surrounded by some forty million Arabs contemplating their destruction may make good advertising copy during bond drives, but it would seem to form only a marginal part of the perspective of the Israeli "on the ground," so to speak.

The initial Israeli position, in June 1967, that of simple aggression by forces of the United Arab Republic, soon gave way to a new definition: aggression-by-provocation, provocation in this case being the concentration of men and military materiel in the Sinai. While estimates vary, there is no question but that Egyptian troops were being concentrated

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 71.

<sup>39</sup> Y. Harkabi, *The Arab-Israeli Confrontation: An Israeli View* (A paper submitted to the seventh annual conference of the Institute for Strategic Studies), p. 13.



near the armistice line, and from this indisputable fact Israelis chose to draw justification for "preemptive" action.

This being the case, two questions arise: 1) were Egyptian troops and armour present in such numbers as to be capable of mounting an offensive against Israel? and 2) was an offensive intended? These two questions deserve consideration together as they are, to some extent, inter-related, at least in the popular mind.

It will be recalled that President Nasser's speech of the 26th of May carried the assertion, repeated on other occasions as well, that hostilities between Egypt and Israel were not envisaged unless "Israel embarks on an aggression against Syria and Egypt . . ."<sup>40</sup> Soviet and American representations made at the time to the United Arab Republic were received with replies consistent with that message: that no military initiative would be taken. Egyptian obligations to Syria would be observed, but Israel would have to attack first.<sup>41</sup> The Israelis, officially, were not impressed and bombarded the world's press with reports of armed clashes and emphasized these hostile acts as "part of an over-all plan, the design of which is now unfolding."<sup>42</sup> Foreign Minister Eban departed for the United States, a visit not appreciated in Washington, for a talk with President Johnson. Prior to that session, he met with Secretary of State Dean Rusk and Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara, at which time General Earle Wheeler, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, was summoned to give the estimates of the Department of Defense:—

General Wheeler was called in to join the meeting and he gave the official evaluation. He had no information of any Egyptian intention to attack, he declared; if anything, it was the Israeli army that was pressing to begin hostilities. And he repeated that in the Pentagon's view Israel had nothing to fear. Her army was, in their estimation, far superior to that of Egypt.<sup>43</sup>

<sup>40</sup> See p. 14.

<sup>41</sup> Later, a Soviet official interviewed by journalist Eric Rouleau commented on the USSR's advice to the Egyptians: "Indeed, we advised Nasser not to plunge into an adventure, . . ." "Prudence should have been coupled with vigilance." Rouleau et al, *Israel et les Arabes: Le 3e Combat* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1967), pp. 102-103.

<sup>42</sup> Gideon Rafael, in the Security Council, 24 May 1967. S/PV.1342, p. 42.

<sup>43</sup> This meeting took place on 25 May. Kimche and Bawly, *op. cit.*, p. 126.

The Central Intelligence Agency had reached the same conclusion.<sup>44</sup> Further, two dispatches filed by James Reston from Cairo stated without reservation that the United Arab Republic did not wish war, was "certainly not ready for war" and had been making no preparations within the country itself.<sup>45</sup> It was his impression that such steps as had been taken were to deter the Israelis and Americans from undesirable actions.

Finally, the Israelis themselves, well after the event, conceded the point. General Rabin, in an interview published in *Le Monde*, had what must be the final word: "I do not believe that Nasser wanted war. The two divisions he sent into Sinai on May 14 would not have been enough to unleash an offensive against Israel. He knew it and we knew it."<sup>46</sup>

It would seem clear, then, that the outbreak of war in June 1967 cannot be accounted for in wholly military terms. Israel struck, it would seem, not so much out of fear as out of a sense of opportunity—bolstered by honoring the concept of the "war-in-being," for clearly "preemption" no longer applied. There were gains to be made. Winning the war was itself one of them. But there were other, perhaps secondary, opportunities to be realized that came as a consequence of the war, and it is to these that we now address ourselves.

<sup>44</sup> Richard Helms, Director of the Central Intelligence Agency, shared General Wheeler's view that an Israeli initiative in the air against the Arabs would result in a victory in three or four days. *L'Orient*, 13 June 1967.

<sup>45</sup> *The New York Times*, 4 & 5 June, 1967.

<sup>46</sup> *The Jerusalem Post*, 29 February 1968, p. 2, and *Le Monde*, 28 February 1968.



### Chapter III

## THE STATUS OF JERUSALEM

When the armistice was signed in 1948, the city of Jerusalem was divided into two parts: the Jewish Quarter and the Arab Quarter. The Jewish Quarter was located in the east, and the Arab Quarter was located in the west. The city was divided by a wall, and the two parts were separated by a fence. The Jewish Quarter was under the control of the Jewish Agency, and the Arab Quarter was under the control of the Arab Higher Committee. The city was divided into two parts, and the two parts were separated by a wall and a fence. The Jewish Quarter was under the control of the Jewish Agency, and the Arab Quarter was under the control of the Arab Higher Committee.

Later, the wall was torn down, and the city was united. The Jewish Quarter and the Arab Quarter were joined together, and the city was no longer divided. The Jewish Quarter and the Arab Quarter were joined together, and the city was no longer divided. The Jewish Quarter and the Arab Quarter were joined together, and the city was no longer divided. The Jewish Quarter and the Arab Quarter were joined together, and the city was no longer divided. The Jewish Quarter and the Arab Quarter were joined together, and the city was no longer divided.

<sup>1</sup> UN Truce Commission, 11 June 1948.

<sup>2</sup> UN Truce Commission, 11 June 1948.

<sup>3</sup> UN Truce Commission, 11 June 1948.

<sup>4</sup> UN Truce Commission, 11 June 1948.

<sup>5</sup> UN Truce Commission, 11 June 1948.



ONE of the opportunities, one exceptional opportunity, that emerged from the June War, came not from Israel's confrontation with the United Arab Republic but rather from its conflict with Jordan. This, the conquest of the Old City of Jerusalem, of all Israeli territorial acquisitions, constituted a very special case. Brigadier General Haim Herzog, broadcasting to the nation on 6 June, invoked what was characterized as a Jewish dream of some 2000 years in realization: "Israel," he said, "was reliving history."<sup>47</sup> As he spoke, Israeli forces swept around the Jordanian sector of Jerusalem, reaching Mount Scopus. Effective resistance by the Jordanian army ceased on the 8th. The day before, with the Old City, to all intents and purposes, in Israeli hands, General Dayan spoke to units of the army: "The Israeli Defense Forces liberated Jerusalem. We have reunited the torn City, the Capital of Israel. We have returned to this most sacred Shrine, never to part from it again."<sup>48</sup> This thought found dramatic repetition in the remarks of Foreign Minister Eban at the Fifth Emergency Special Session of the General Assembly, less than a fortnight later:

Jerusalem, now united after its tragic division, is no longer an arena for gun emplacements and barbed wire. In our nation's long history there have been few hours more intensely moving than the hour of our reunion with the Western Wall. A people had come back to the cradle of its birth. It has renewed its link with the mystery of its origin and its continuity. How long and deep are the memories which that union evokes.<sup>49</sup>

Later, he would speak of a renewal of contacts in the city "on every human level in an ecumenical spirit."<sup>50</sup> Ecumenicism aside, however, past and present United Nations resolutions on the universality of interests in the city were dismissed: "Israel's views on territorial internationalization are well known and have not changed."<sup>51</sup> This was an opportunity not to be denied. Almost immediately, as early as 8 June, preliminary steps were taken towards the absorption of the Old City by means of a decision

<sup>47</sup> UPI dispatch, Tel Aviv, 7 June 1967.

<sup>48</sup> UPI dispatch, Tel Aviv, 7 June 1967.

<sup>49</sup> A/PV.1526 (19 June 1967), p. 61.

<sup>50</sup> A/PV.1547 (4 July 1967), p. 37.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 36.



of the Israeli Jerusalem City Council to expand its Master Plan to include the newly acquired districts, and to create a \$50 million fund for the reconstruction of historical and religious sites.<sup>52</sup> A week later, the Israeli cabinet was called into session to consider a special bill that would transform the Old City into an integral part of Israel. On 20 June the Knesset passed a series of enabling acts, extending Israeli sovereignty in a number of significant areas, and on the 27th formal approval was given to the unification of the city, taking effect the next day. Jerusalem and its environs had been subtracted from the list of negotiable properties.<sup>53</sup>

In treating the question of Jerusalem, as in treating any of the issues that have arisen as a result of the June War, we must of necessity return to the stated purposes of the Israelis in taking the initiative that they themselves now admit. The initial posture was that of defense against imminent attack by one or more Arab states, but desiring, at the same time "neither to violate either their security, or their territory."<sup>54</sup> As Israeli forces took "preemptive" action on 5 June, Prime Minister Eshkol stressed the theme: "In conclusion, we do not demand anything except to live in tranquility in our present territory and to have the opportunity of exercising our legitimate maritime rights."<sup>55</sup> On the same day, General Dayan: "Soldiers of Israel, we have no aim of territorial conquest."<sup>56</sup> Out of government, but not out of mind, David Ben-Gurion described the war as "a defensive struggle (and Israel will not engage in any but a defensive struggle)."<sup>57</sup> From no quarter on that momentous day, came any statement with an authoritative ring qualifying the basic theme: defense—and defense alone.

<sup>52</sup> According to a UPI dispatch from Jerusalem, 9 June 1967, the City Council approved the immediate expenditure of \$20 million to repair damages resulting from the war. Presumably this formed part of a \$50 million allocation reported the day before.

<sup>53</sup> At first the Israelis practiced a good deal of circumspection. Mayor Teddy Kollek preferred "not to speak of annexation but of remarriage" in speaking of the events of the previous week. UPI dispatch, Jerusalem, 30 June 1967. On 29 June, at a press conference in New York, Foreign Minister Eban denied Israeli annexation, suggesting that the laws passed were purely administrative in character. UPI dispatch, United Nations, 29 June, 1967. (Later, on 24 July at a London press conference, Eban was less evasive, stating that the unification of Jerusalem was permanent. UPI dispatch, 24 July 1967). There is nothing to suggest that within the government there was any important opposition to the annexation of the Old City. And outside government circles, in a general atmosphere of euphoria, approval was widespread, encouraged by such formidable figures as David Ben-Gurion, who commented bluntly that Jerusalem was non-negotiable. UPI dispatch, Jerusalem, 19 June 1967.

<sup>54</sup> See above, p. 13.

<sup>55</sup> Jerusalem Israel Domestic Service (in Hebrew), 2000 hours GMT, 5 June 1967.

<sup>56</sup> *The New York Times*, 5 June 1967, p. 16.

<sup>57</sup> *Jerusalem Post*, 5 June 1967, p. 5.

Jerusalem proved to be the first exception. This was no longer defense: now "Israel was reliving history"—Jerusalem was liberated.<sup>58</sup> Jerusalem was not to be "united" but rather "reunited." "Surely the unity," argued Foreign Minister Eban, "once achieved, is irrevocable. We have conscientious objection, on grounds transcending political considerations, against allowing Jerusalem to fall under divided jurisdiction. The General Assembly would not do the United Nations service in expressing a view on behalf of division, disunity and barrier-building."<sup>59</sup>

The United Nations felt otherwise, and recorded its displeasure in the Fifth Emergency Special Session in the resolution adopted on 4 July 1967:

The General Assembly,

Deeply concerned at the situation prevailing in Jerusalem as a result of the measures taken by Israel to change the status of the City,

1. Considers that these measures are invalid;
2. Calls upon Israel to rescind all measures already taken and to desist forthwith from taking any action which would alter the status of Jerusalem;
3. Requests the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly and the Security Council on the situation and the implementation of the present resolution not later than one week from its adoption.<sup>60</sup>

Israel declined to vote on the resolution (which passed in the Assembly 90-to-0 with 20 abstentions, among them the United States), and its delegation commented only that the issue was "outside the legal competence of the General Assembly."<sup>61</sup> Foreign Minister Eban had earlier informed representatives of the Latin American states that international interests in Jerusalem were confined exclusively to its religious context, repeating a now familiar Israeli attitude towards internationalization of the city. In an interview with UPI correspondent Joseph W. Grigg, Min-

<sup>58</sup> See above, p. 35.

<sup>59</sup> A/PV.1547 (4 July 1967), p. 38.

<sup>60</sup> Resolution 2253 (ES-V), 4 July 1967. It should be noted that American abstention from voting did by no means suggest approval of Israeli actions with respect to Jerusalem. The government, in a formal statement, denounced the act quite specifically and declared that the United States would not recognize its validity. *The New York Times*, 29 June 1967, p. 14. In this, the United States was joined by the United Kingdom and France, among others. Subsequent American statements have reiterated its original position. On 15 January 1968, the State Department informed Israel that the United States opposed "unilateral actions affecting the status of Jerusalem" and on 8 March, Robert J. McCloskey stated that the United States regards the eastern portion of Jerusalem as "occupied territory and therefore subject to the provisions of international law governing the rights and obligations of an occupying power." *The Christian Science Monitor*, 11 February 1968, p. 2.

<sup>61</sup> UPI dispatch, United Nations, 5 July 1967.



ister of Labor, Yigal Allon, gave what was, in view of subsequent events, a definitive statement on the subject: "The world must reconcile itself to the fact that the city has at last returned to the nation that founded it and that turned it into a holy city."<sup>62</sup>

Outside Israel, however, there was an increasing concern for, indeed resentment over, Israel's high disregard, hardly unvoiced, for the consensus of the international community as expressed in the Assembly, as well as over concrete manifestations of that disregard in the city itself. In the General Assembly and the Security Council, successive resolutions "re-iterated", "deplored", "called upon", "deeply deplored" and "reaffirmed"—all in a fruitless attempt to gain Israeli compliance, and to bring to a halt the unconcealed consolidation of their occupation of the city.<sup>63</sup> How little impact this had on Israeli policies with respect to the affairs of the city is seen from the text of a resolution approved by the Security Council slightly less than a year later, which reads like a carbon copy of the unheeded resolution of 4 July 1967:—

The Security Council,  
Recalling General Assembly Resolutions 2253 (ES-V) and 2254 (ES-V) of 4 and 14 July 1967,

Having considered the letter (S/8560) of the Permanent Representative of Jordan on the situation in Jerusalem and the report of the Secretary-General (S/8164),

Having heard the statements made before the Council,  
Noting that since the adoption of the above-mentioned resolutions, Israel has taken further measures and action in contravention of those resolutions,

Bearing in mind the need to work for a just and lasting peace,  
Reaffirming that acquisition of territory by military conquest is inadmissible,

1. Deplores the failure of Israel to comply with the General Assembly resolutions mentioned above,
2. Considers that all legislative and administrative measures and actions taken by Israel, including expropriation of land and properties thereon, which tend to change the legal status of Jerusalem are invalid and cannot change that status;
3. Urgently calls upon Israel to rescind all such measures

<sup>62</sup> UPI dispatch, New York, 5 July 1967.

<sup>63</sup> In the General Assembly: 2253 (ES-V) 4 July 1967 and 2254 (ES-V) 14 July 1967; in the Security Council: 250 (1968) 27 April 1968, 251 (1968) 2 May 1968, and 252 (1968) 21 May 1968.

already taken and to desist forthwith from taking any further action which tends to change the status of Jerusalem;

4. Requests the Secretary-General to report to the Security Council on the implementation of the present resolution.<sup>64</sup>

The Israeli response came with Pavlovian predictability:

The resolution [just adopted] is neither practical nor reasonable. It ignores reality and disregards Israel's basic rights. It seeks to violate the natural unity of Jerusalem and to overlook the interests of Jerusalem's inhabitants and their welfare. It advocates the return to the nightmare of separation and religious discrimination. It does not contribute to the attainment of peace.<sup>65</sup>

The resolution went the way of its predecessors. And by the peculiar logic so consistently applied by the Israelis, the custodianship of morality resided on this occasion, as on others, with Israel in the face of the international community—which remained unjust, uncomprehending, and unyielding to Israeli entreaties.

The "road to Jerusalem," as mapped by the Israelis, has been a tortuous one indeed. Determined by the opportunities of the moment, it defies logic. From an avowed position of nonannexation, it has proceeded by stages to the somewhat vague "reliving of history" as Israelis returned to a Jerusalem "faithful to its history;"<sup>66</sup> to administrative unity somewhat short of legal annexation; to denials of annexation while extending the frontiers of Israeli sovereignty; to unity then redefined as "reunity;" to an awareness of international obligations while denying the validity of the concept of internationalization; to formal unification of the city and *de facto* annexation. "Jerusalem the workshop of understanding and coexistence between Israeli and Arab. Nothing can tarnish the truth about Jerusalem. Nothing can change its reality," in the words of Israeli Ambassador Tekoah who proceeded to assert:

Fully conscious of its international obligations, respectful of the universal interests in the city, inspired by Jerusalem's rejuvenation, the Government of Israel will do all in its power to ensure the welfare of the city and the happiness of its people.<sup>67</sup>

This, in the view of not a few Israeli spokesmen, was a task that

<sup>64</sup> 252 (1968), 21 May 1968.

<sup>65</sup> S/PV.1426 (21 May 1968), p. 43.

<sup>66</sup> S/PV.1426 (21 May 1968), p. 42.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 43.



Israel was specially suited to undertake. In the view of General Dayan, as early as 11 June 1967:

I think that Jerusalem, of course being the holy city for the three religions, still should and can be the capital of Israel and entirely under our control and within our country and at the same time we can not only guarantee the freedom of worships to all the other religions, but really to provide the peace to Jerusalem, I personally believe much better than anyone else.<sup>68</sup>

Thus Israeli occupation of the city, in violation of repeated United Nations resolutions, became sanctified with a sense of mission. If that mission was criticized, the issue was adroitly transformed into a domestic affair—"outside the legal competence of the General Assembly."<sup>69</sup> The "welfare of the city and the happiness of its people" had become an exclusively Israeli concern. Jerusalem had fallen, to all intents and purposes, within Israeli jurisdiction.

Israeli "jurisdiction," whatever its legal status may be now or in the future, carries with it obligations as well as rights. This the Israelis have themselves conceded in spelling out their responsibility for ensuring the "welfare of the city and the happiness of its people." But here, again, the spoken word and reality are hardly coterminous. Arbitrary arrests, expropriations, destruction of private property, violations of religious sites—all have been the more visible characteristics of Israeli administrative behavior.<sup>70</sup> The details of Israeli rule have been widely documented and are too well known to require repetition here. Clearly, however, the welfare and happiness of the city's Arab inhabitants have enjoyed a very low priority.

The occupation of Jerusalem was not an act of defense, but rather an act of fulfillment. The important decisions concerning the fate of the city were made almost simultaneously with its conquest—and implementation of those decisions was not far behind. Israeli policy with respect to the city, and the philosophy upon which it is based, was perhaps best summarized by Prime Minister Eshkol: "Israel without Jerusalem is Israel without a head . . . Jerusalem is the heart of the Jewish people in its present rebirth."<sup>71</sup>

<sup>68</sup> General Dayan on "Face the Nation," 11 June 1967.

<sup>69</sup> See above, p. 37.

<sup>70</sup> In the period between July 1967 and October 1968, no less than forty complaints were filed with Israeli authorities by Muslim religious organizations and leaders over transgressions involving Muslim holy places. This does not include complaints by Christian Arabs. See below, Chapter V.

<sup>71</sup> UPI dispatch, Bonn, 10 July 1967.

## *Chapter IV*

# THE SHAPING OF TERRITORIAL IMPERATIVES



*A new political reality in the Mideast has been created.*

(PRIME MINISTER ESHKOL, June 1967)<sup>72</sup>

<sup>72</sup>UPI dispatch, London, 9 June 1967.



WITHIN the space of six days, Israel extended the territory under its effective control to an area roughly three times that held as of 4 June 1967. To date, there has been no alteration in the situation: Israeli military control extends from the Suez Canal to Quneitra in Syria; from the Mediterranean to the Jordan River. "Greater Israel," an expression usually associated with the more militant Zionist circles, has, for the moment at least, assumed certain of the characteristics of reality. Seldom in modern times has self-defense proved to be such a profitable undertaking.

Israel's plans for the occupied territories in general—somewhat more ambiguous than its designs on Jerusalem—remain unclear. The official position of the government is that territorial questions will remain open pending bilateral discussions with each of the Arab parties. As we have seen, initial Israeli representations eschewed all notions of territorial aggrandizement. On the other hand, subsequent authoritative statements have strongly implied that something else was in the offing. In two separate interviews, Foreign Minister Eban was led to comment: "Sometimes you cannot gain peace and security without territorial gains;" and earlier, "If the General Assembly were to vote by 121 votes to 1 in favour of Israel returning to the armistice lines . . . Israel would refuse to comply with that decision."<sup>73</sup> Other statements were more specific: Yigal Allon, early in June, said that "We will hold on to the areas necessary to our security. . . . We do not need the Sinai Peninsula. We are willing to consider the return of certain areas in exchange for peace."<sup>74</sup> Later in the same month, Allon once again: "We must have depth, especially in the central part of the country and the vicinity of Galilee and Jerusalem."<sup>75</sup> Defense Minister Moshe Dayan, in a somewhat controversial interview on CBS's *Face the Nation* telecast on 11 June, gave his personal views:—

I don't think that we should in any way give back the Gaza Strip to Egypt or the western part of Jordan to King Hussein. . . .

<sup>73</sup> Interview on West German television, 5 July 1967; and *The New York Times*, 19 June 1967, p. 8. Subsequent events were to lend credence to that statement. See Appendix I for a summary of pertinent U.N. resolutions.

<sup>74</sup> UPI dispatch, Jerusalem, 12 June 1967.

<sup>75</sup> UPI dispatch, 19 June 1967.



The Arabs on the western, the new area—and I do not of course include Jerusalem which is our capital . . . except for that, the area there—I am still for some arrangement of autonomy for the Arabs there and the security being granted to us for that area. That is to say the Jordan would be, let's say, the military border on the eastern side, but that the million Arabs living on the western side would have their own autonomy.<sup>76</sup>

While the statements issuing from various Israeli sources range widely from the vague to the specific, without any consensus in concrete terms, the evidence suggests that regardless of what might come from hypothetical bilateral negotiations, the map of the Middle East may never be the same. Israel's position has hardened, strengthened by the sheer passage of time, and carries with it a hint of arrogance.<sup>77</sup> Not fearing, for the moment, any serious military challenge on the part of the Arabs, and knowing the impotence of the United Nations in coming to grips with the situation, Israel remains content to let time do its work. Much can be accomplished in the midst of a diplomatic stalemate.

In approaching the entire territorial question from an Israeli perspective, one detects two undercurrents—one essentially pragmatic in its appraisal of the possibilities, the other to some extent ideological. The first derives from a fortuitous combination of opportunity and perceived necessity. The second stems from the combination of opportunity and a sense of an historical past and present mission. Both contribute to the shaping of territorial imperatives. Both overwhelm the denials of territorial aspirations issued at the outbreak of hostilities.

Superficially, the ideological aspect is the least complicated, resting as it does on a classical doctrine, enunciated, as it were, in a political vacuum, freed from the vicissitudes of historical circumstance. Classical Zionism, somewhat vague as originally enunciated at the turn of the century by its principal architect, Theodor Herzl, called for the creation of a Jewish state: "The northern frontier is to be the mountains facing Cappadocia [in Turkish territory]; the southern, the Suez Canal. Our slogan shall be: 'The Palestine of David and Solomon.'"<sup>78</sup> History presents opportunities; it also raises obstacles. And Zionism, in the years since

<sup>76</sup> *Face the Nation* (CBS Television Network) 11 June 1967.

<sup>77</sup> Such could be noted, for example, in a speech by Foreign Minister Eban at a meeting of the Mapai Party on 8 September 1967: "The problem is not any longer whether Jordan recognizes Israel, but whether Israel recognizes the existence of Jordan." *L'Orient*, 9 September, 1967.

<sup>78</sup> Marvin Lowenthal (trans.), *The Diaries of Theodor Herzl* (New York: Dial Press, 1956), p. 124.

Herzl's bold proposals, has been subject to many disappointments as its advocates ventured from the realm of ideas and programs to be confronted almost immediately by harsh reality. The fact that Palestine was already inhabited by a long-established population seems not to have been taken too seriously, but the fact that Zionism outside Zionist circles had no appeal—and little political leverage—in Europe or elsewhere was something to be contended with. The First World War yielded only the assurance that the British Government viewed favorably "the establishment in Palestine of a National Home for the Jewish people" with the unwelcome qualification that nothing should be done which might prejudice the civil and religious rights of the existing population.<sup>79</sup> The Paris Peace Conference, which seemed a moment of opportunity, again denied the Zionists the fulfillment of their dream, writing the minimal terms of the Balfour Declaration into the preamble of a Mandate for Palestine that was to be administered by Britain. Denied independence within the confines of a Palestine now territorially diminished, Zionist leadership was obliged to exploit the limited advantages it enjoyed by an attack on the system in areas of greatest vulnerability. The constraints on their freedom of action were many, some imposed by the mandatory administration, others by an increasingly suspicious and hostile Arab population. That situation prevailed until after the Second World War. The tactics employed were adapted to the situation: mass immigration, land purchase (largely from absentee Arab landholders) and, ultimately, terrorism.

The Second World War and its aftermath presented unprecedented opportunities. The British hand was weakened and its administration of the mandate was thrown badly off balance by clandestine Zionist activities. Abroad, the Zionist cause gained the momentum that it previously lacked by the widespread awareness of the tragedy of European Jews under German rule, an awareness that grew as subsequent disclosures indicated the extent of that tragedy. Out of awareness grew a sense of responsibility for all that had happened. The conscience of the world was justifiably stricken in a momentous wave of revulsion, that the Zionist movement turned into political currency.

The moment had come. In May 1942, the Emergency Committee for Zionist Affairs held a conference in New York, from which emerged the call for the full implementation of the now aging Basle program of

<sup>79</sup> The Balfour Declaration of 1917, Cmd. 5479, *Report of the Palestine Commission, 1937* (the "Peel Report"), p. 22. It should be noted that the population of Palestine as of 1918 was as follows: 644,000 Arabs (574,000 of whom were Muslim, 70,000 Christian) and 56,000 Jews. Government of Palestine, *A Survey of Palestine 1945-1946*, p. 144.



the First Zionist Congress (1897). A year later, on 5 May 1943, General Patrick J. Hurley, cognizant of the general acceptance of the "Biltmore Program" (so-named after the Biltmore Hotel, the scene of the 1942 conference), and after consulting with Zionist leaders, reported to President Roosevelt:

The Zionist organization in Palestine has indicated its commitment to an enlarged program for:

1. a sovereign Jewish State which would embrace Palestine and probably eventually Transjordan;
2. an eventual transfer of the Arab population from Palestine to Iraq;
3. Jewish leadership for the whole Middle East in the fields of economic development and control.<sup>80</sup>

A modest proposal. But again, events conspired to limit the boundaries of Zionist ambition. Arab resistance, never as coordinated or as effective as that of its adversaries, quickened in tempo and in force, especially as the Second World War drew to a close and as the issue became, in a sense, "internationalized." The desire of the British to be relieved of their mandatory responsibilities, was predictably accompanied by the intensification of Zionist offensives in the military and diplomatic fields. The situation was, by the most conservative estimates, out of control, and the United Nations became a party to the conflict, in which status it has remained for an agonizing two decades.

The "solution" in the United Nations came in the form of a partition resolution approved in the General Assembly on 29 November 1947, subdividing Palestine into seven parts: three assigned to a Jewish state (56% of the total land area), three to an Arab state (43%), and an international zone embracing Jerusalem and its environs. From an Arab point of view, the resolution was a disaster. Of an estimated population of 2,065,000, 1,415,000 were Arabs and 650,000 were Jews, and yet lands assigned to the Jewish state constituted over 56% of the total area of Palestine, of which legal land-ownership by Jews was limited to less than 10%.<sup>81</sup> Zionist leadership, by no means satisfied with the territorial aspects of the plan, nonetheless supported its passage in a diplomatic onslaught almost without precedent. The Arabs rejected the plan and, predictably, violence once again erupted.

It became clear that the resolution could not be implemented peace-

<sup>80</sup> United States, Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the U.S.: Near East and Africa* (Washington, D.C., 1964), Vol. IV, pp. 776-777.

<sup>81</sup> An estimate based on the Report of the UNSCOP-UN Document A/364, Vol. I, p. 54.

fully, and the Security Council was called into session on 19 March 1948. The representative of the United States recommended a temporary trusteeship for Palestine and requested that a special session of the General Assembly be convened. Partition was to be suspended pending further consideration of the problem.

This was rejected by the representative of the Jewish Agency on 24 March, and Zionist initiatives switched from the diplomatic to the military. In the words of David Ben-Gurion: "As April [1948] began, our War of Independence swung decisively from defence to attack."<sup>82</sup> Elaborating on this in a meeting with American Zionists in Jerusalem, he added: "Until the British left, no Jewish settlement, however remote, was entered or seized by Arabs, while the Haganah . . . captured many Arab positions and liberated Tiberias and Haifa, Jaffa and Safad . . . So, on that day of destiny, that part of Palestine where the Haganah could operate was almost clear of Arabs."<sup>83</sup> With the withdrawal of the British administration and forces on 15 May 1948, hostilities broadened and all of Palestine became a battlefield. It proved to be an unequal contest. The Palestinian Arabs, supported by the armies of the neighboring Arab states, gradually lost ground to an army that constantly grew in manpower and technical capabilities. Futile cease-fire arrangements, continued debates in the United Nations, and continued fighting brought still further losses. The drama came to an end with the signing of a series of armistice agreements in 1949. Israeli independence, proclaimed on 14 May 1948, had been consolidated.

By the determined pursuit of opportunity, the Israelis had succeeded in occupying some 8,000 square miles of the roughly 10,400 square miles of mandatory Palestine—77.40% in place of the 56.47% of the territory assigned to them under the partition plan. Legal landholding by Israelis constituted only 7.23% of the total.<sup>84</sup> Dispossessed by the outcome of the war were some hundreds of thousands of Arab refugees who sought refuge in adjacent Arab lands, where they remained prior to the June 1967 war, over a million in number. 100,000 Arabs remained in Israel (by 1965 they numbered over 200,000), an unwanted minority.

<sup>82</sup> David Ben-Gurion, *Rebirth and Destiny of Israel* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1954), p. 296.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 530-531.

<sup>84</sup> Sami Hadawi, *Palestine in Focus* (Beirut: Palestine Research Center, 1968), p. 52ff. Hadawi, while not a disinterested "spectator" in the Palestine problem, has, through his long association with the Government of Palestine's land survey program, come to be considered authoritative in matters of demography and land ownership.



As may be seen from this narrative, ideology and opportunism are constant companions in the achievement of Zionist ideals. A flexible, pragmatic program, a considerable dilution of the old Basle program, brought Israel to the situation it enjoyed as of the spring of 1949. The pragmatist might have been satisfied with what was, by any standards, an impressive achievement. The ideologue was not. The task had not, in a true sense, been completed. A not untypical view was that of Ben-Gurion, who stated: "Only now [1951] . . . have we reached the beginning of independence in a part of our small country."<sup>85</sup> Further: "To maintain the status quo will not do. We have set up a dynamic State, bent upon creation, reform, building and expansion."<sup>86</sup> As if to lend emphasis to the point, Israel transferred its seat of government from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem in the face of a General Assembly resolution expressing its decision "To restate . . . its intention that Jerusalem be placed under a permanent international regime . . ."<sup>87</sup> Chief Rabbi Yehuda Maimon stated, somewhat extravagantly, at a five-day congress of the Jewish National Fund (7 August 1951), that the organization must be prepared to "redeem the whole land of Israel—from the River of Egypt to the River of Euphrates."<sup>88</sup> Abba Eban, more of a pragmatist, made a somewhat lesser claim: "We are not interested in either the Nile or the Euphrates but we are interested in the Jordan and its sources."<sup>89</sup>

Whatever the dreams of the ideologues, the opportunities in the years after the armistice were meagre. Apart from Israeli activity in certain of the demilitarized zones and water diversion schemes, little was gained. The Nile and the Euphrates remained as remote as ever, and the tripartite offensive of 1956 yielded nothing in the way of territory, owing to a rare accord between the United States and the Soviet Union. Access to the Red Sea through the Gulf of Aqaba was a tangible gain, but lacking in territorial implications.

June 1967 provided what had been lacking in two decades of armed confrontation and, in the words of Prime Minister Eshkol, a "new political reality" was created, an opportunity of enormous value in both practical and ideological terms. We have referred already to the military aspect of the June War, suggesting that the extent of Israeli successes were in and

<sup>85</sup> David Ben-Gurion, *op. cit.*, p. 402.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 419.

<sup>87</sup> Resolution 303 (IV), 9 December 1949.

<sup>88</sup> *Jerusalem Post*, 8 August 1951, p. 2.

<sup>89</sup> *Jerusalem Post*, 2 May 1951, p. 1.

of themselves a value. We have discussed at some length the acquisition of the Old City of Jerusalem and its environs which while serving the needs of ideology also had value in very practical terms, both strategic and economic. So it was with the rest of the territorial gains of June 1967. The official Israeli position has been one of holding fast while testing its environment—leaving all options open. It reflects, in a sense, indecision as to how to use its gains, not to mention doubts as to the price the government could afford to purchase peace, should the Arabs prove willing to treat. The pressures on the government have been many and varied. Practical men argue the merits of permanently holding territory for reasons of security, of which the Golan Heights is a good example, Gaza another. The ideologues, admitting the practical reasons for retaining the conquered territories, proceed to argue for that retention in the terms of classical Zionism. In religious circles, the determined advocacy of a "Greater Israel" embracing the gains of June took the following form:

Jerusalem and the land of Israel are holy to us. The land was promised to us by the Almighty, and all the prophets foretold its return to us. Therefore, it is forbidden for any Jew even to consider returning any part whatsoever of the land of our forefathers.<sup>90</sup>

This, the statement of Chief Rabbi Nissim in a halachic ruling, is not far from the sentiments of General Dayan, speaking privately on behalf of his party: ". . . This may not be a political programme, but it is more important—it is the fulfillment of a people's ancestral dreams."<sup>91</sup> And later: with reference to the West Bank and Gaza, that Israel should maintain the boundaries of historic "Eretz Israel", and the requirements of Zionism make imperative the retention of "the stones and territories," adding that "To deny such yearning means to ignore the basis of the return to Zion."<sup>92</sup> Even the Golan Heights, usually thought of in strategic terms, acquired the substance of ideology when Yigal Allon expressed his surprise that a member of the cabinet should have the audacity to negate the Biblical affinity of the Golan and the Bashan Range. "The Golan is no less part of ancient Israel than Hebron and Nablus, for did not Jephtha judge there?"<sup>93</sup> Allon called for volunteers to establish paramilitary (Nahal) settlements to "strike roots" in the Jordan Valley, the Hebron,

<sup>90</sup> *Jerusalem Post*, 29 October 1967, p. 8.

<sup>91</sup> *Jerusalem Post*, 10 August 1967, p. 1.

<sup>92</sup> *Jerusalem Post*, 13 December 1967, p. 1.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, 16 August 1967, p. 6.



the Golan Heights and Gaza, for which, he said, there was historical justification.<sup>94</sup> From various quarters calls were issued for the settling of the "liberated areas" and the stepping up of immigration to provide the necessary population. Popular organizations, such as the "Movement for the Entire Land of Israel," denied the very mandate of the government to return any of the occupied territories, "not . . . an inch": "We cannot give away what belongs to our children and our children's children."<sup>95</sup>

There the situation stands. The ideologue has triumphed, nourished by circumstance. And history suggests that Israel, practiced in the art of the *fait accompli*, will not of its own will give up what it has acquired. In the view of Moshe Dayan: "One factor must be taken into account in any debate on the future of the occupied areas—the yearning of the people of Israel to return to its land. Without this yearning, and its fulfillment, there would never have been a State of Israel nor [a] return to Zion, which is even more important than the State."<sup>96</sup>

## Chapter V

# THE HUMAN DIMENSION

<sup>94</sup>*The New York Times*, 16 August 1967. The "roots" were, indeed, quickly struck. By August 1968, the Israelis admitted that 14 Nahal settlements had been located in occupied territories, principally Golan Heights. (S/8696, 29 July 1968.) This was quickly challenged by the Ambassador of Jordan, Muhammad El-Farra, who pointed out a number, by no means a few, of other areas in which the Israelis were establishing settlements. (S/8717, 2 August 1968.)

The Israelis have been, if anything, openly enthusiastic about their plans for the occupied territories. The water resources of the Golan Heights were surveyed with an eye to utilization, and plans for land allocation have been published widely in the *Jerusalem Post* and elsewhere. No attempt has been made to conceal developments. On the contrary, emphasis has been added to the permanence of the settlement program, as, for example, in the statement of Yehuda Gezrel, secretary of Kibbutz Golan: "We have been here for more than a year . . . It is our home now." *The New York Times*, 14 August 1968.

<sup>95</sup>*The Jewish Press* (New York), week of 27 December-2 January, 1969, p. 5.

<sup>96</sup>*Jerusalem Post* (overseas ed.), 1 January 1968, p. 6.



IN the muted corridors and conference rooms of the United Nations, remote in distance—both geographical and psychological—from the often momentous events brought before its membership, one tends to lose sight of the fact that those events are not mere political abstractions advanced for ritual debate. Wars, threats of war, territorial questions, the status of a city, away from the sights and sounds that are part of their reality, lose in reality. Depersonalization is inevitably a characteristic of debates at this level, and while no delegate doubts for a moment that humans are tragically involved, this does not form a major part of his perspective of the situation.

The hard fact of the matter is, however, that human beings were, and are, desperately involved in the events of June 1967 and its aftermath, as indeed they have been for the past twenty years of armed confrontation between Arabs and Israelis. Apart from the military casualties which run in the thousands, civilian losses and suffering have been enormous in the first instance from the war itself, and later as a consequence of a seriously deteriorating situation in the occupied territories. A new wave of refugees, not a few dispossessed for a second time within the confines of two decades, swelled into adjacent havens, where they live under appalling conditions. Those who fled from fear had the company of those who were simply expelled by the Israeli authorities. And those who remained met with treatment that has been both disturbing and well-documented. The Arab inhabitants of the West Bank and elsewhere—both Muslim and Christian—are not cherished as are “the stones and territories” so cherished by General Dayan.<sup>97</sup>

Israel has through its representatives professed repeatedly that it recognizes its responsibility for the welfare of the inhabitants in the occupied territories, and a very special responsibility for the care of religious interests, of paramount importance to three of the major faiths, in Jerusalem and its environs (these representations have been discussed in some detail in Chapter III, above). Israeli assurances in this connection are, indeed, made mandatory by Israel's signature to the articles of the Geneva Convention which state specifically that, in occupied territories, no coercion, “physical or moral” will be exercised against their inhabitants

<sup>97</sup> See above, p. 51.



for any reason, including the procuring of information (Article 31); that acts of brutality are forbidden (Article 32); that "No protected person may be punished for an offense he or she has not personally committed," that pillage and reprisals against persons and property are prohibited (Article 33); and that (in Article 53):

Any destruction by the Occupying Power of movable or immovable property belonging individually or collectively to private persons, or to the State, or to other public authorities, or to social cooperative organizations, is prohibited except where such destruction is rendered absolutely necessary by military operations.

The articles of the Geneva Convention, together with the substance of Israeli official assurances, read like a catalogue of that which has transpired since Israeli occupation of the territories in question. So much so, in fact, that Israeli public opinion, or, more accurately, segments of it, turned on the government to express its dismay. An open letter to the press by a group of some 85 Israeli intellectuals reads, in part, as follows:

Details were published in the areas about what is happening in Israel and in the occupied territories:

Confinement orders, limitations of free movement and arrests without trial were recently imposed on Israeli citizens, Jews and Arabs.

The imposition of collective punishments, like the curfew and the dynamiting of houses, continues in the towns and villages of the occupied territories at an alarming rate. Families of workers and fallaheen, children, women and old people, remain without shelter or means of existence. The stream of refugees and escapers from the Gaza Strip and from the West Bank continues unabatedly.

An increasing number of Arabs is driven out of the Western Bank by order of the Israeli military governor. A protest petition published in the Western Bank stated: "These methods are opposed to international standards and to the basic rights of the citizen to live in his home and on his soil. . ."

Where do these methods lead to if not to an abyss of hatred?<sup>98</sup>

<sup>98</sup> Dated 3 March 1968, and circulated with a covering letter by writer Mordechai Avi-Shaul of Tel-Aviv.

It should be noted, in this context, that in a series of administrative orders promulgated by the Minister of Interior on 28 February, 1968 (taking effect the next day), the occupied West Bank territories had acquired the names "Judea" and "Samaria" in the South and North respectively. The Ministry announced that these areas were no longer legally "enemy territory." *The Jerusalem Post*, 5 March 1968, p. 1. It has been argued that if legally binding, these measures might release Israel from the provisions of the Geneva Convention. The Foreign Ministry denied any political significance to the measures. *Ibid.*

Statements by private Israeli citizens describing specific acts by Israeli authorities exist in the dozens and are adequately documented. Acts committed for the alleged purpose of military security, the systematic destruction of villages in the West Bank, accompanied by the summary removal of their inhabitants and the resultant economic dislocation, has led many foreign observers to consider seriously that this practice—by no means infrequent—constitutes a policy, either official or unofficial, of "cleansing" these areas of Arabs.<sup>99</sup> This, together with Israeli policy and practice with respect to returning refugees (also widely noted in the foreign press), suggests at least what must be considered, in an historical context, a program of "de-Arabization."<sup>100</sup> In searching for answers, it is tempting to reconsider the substance of General Dayan's remarks on "Face the Nation." Concerning the Palestinian Arabs, he said, "We can absorb them, but then it won't be the same country." He was asked: "And it is necessary in your opinion to maintain this as a Jewish state." His reply: "Absolutely—absolutely. We want a Jewish state like the French want a French state."<sup>101</sup>

Pressures on the Arab population, both Muslim and Christian, either as anticipated or as they exist in reality, have not eased.<sup>102</sup> The future holds further uncertainties as the Israelis debate the Palestinians' future and the future of the lands on which they live.<sup>103</sup> And the present offers little in the way of comfort, the evidence of which lies in the many petitions circulated by Muslim and Christian religious leaders and professional people—all Palestinian Arabs.<sup>104</sup> The bulldozers continue their work in Jerusalem, military parades are held (in the face of local protests and U.N. resolutions) in the Old City, religious sites are violated, populations moved about—all with a momentum that is seemingly irresistible. Reso-

<sup>99</sup> See, for example, "West Bank Story," *Private Eye* (London), 10 November 1967; David Holden, "Military Occupations Are Apt to be Nasty for the Occupied," *The Sunday Times* (London), 19 November 1967; Irene Beeson, "The Arabs Claim: 'Israelis Are Driving Us Out,'" *The Observer* (London), 26 January 1968. Coverage is also extensive in the American press. Increasingly, in recent months, foreign—and Israeli—newsmen have encountered restrictions on their freedom of movement in the occupied territories, enforced by local officials with the support of the Military Government. See Appendix II.

<sup>100</sup> Curiously, few, if any, refugees have been readmitted to the City of Jerusalem.

<sup>101</sup> "Face the Nation," *op. cit.*, 11 June 1967.

<sup>102</sup> See the National Council of the Churches of Christ (New York), *Report of Deputation to the Middle East July 19-31, 1968*, p. 5. See Appendix III for an Israeli report on the situation in Gaza.

<sup>103</sup> The recently proposed "Allon plan" is an example of the grounds for these preoccupations.

<sup>104</sup> Concerning Muslim petitions, see above, p. 40, footnote 70. Others, for example, involving Christians as well as Muslims: 20 April 1968, protesting the Israeli military parade in the Arab section of Jerusalem on 2 May; 14 January, 1968, protesting Land (Acquisition for Public Purposes) Ordinance 1943, published in the *Israel Official Gazette* No. 1425 of 11 January 1968.



lutions of the United Nations and affiliated bodies (from June 1967 to date, some 17 in number) do not disturb the tempo. Local resistance only invites repression and further dislocations. Pressures from concerned parties outside the country are answered with solemn assurances—or, more generally, are ignored, the condition that the United Nations has learned to endure.

The vastness of the tragedy of Arabs in their Palestinian context makes adequate summarization virtually impossible. Perhaps the most appropriate summary should be in simple terms, in the words of a Palestinian:—

*Against the agony,  
The world is adamant,  
The sun's eye is gouged,  
The world is lost and torn!*

*The world, my Lord,  
Has not raised a single candle  
Has not shed a single tear  
To wash away  
Jerusalem's grief<sup>105</sup>*

<sup>105</sup> From a poem, "To Christ," by Fadwa Tuqan (Nablus, 1968).



# APPENDIX I

## SYNOPSIS OF RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED BY VARIOUS ORGANS OF THE U.N. SINCE THE CEASE-FIRE, REGARDING THE PALESTINE PROBLEM

<i>Resolution Order</i>	<i>Resolution Number</i>	<i>Date of Adoption</i>	<i>Organ of the UN</i>	<i>Main Provisions</i>
1	237 (1967)	14 June 1967	Security Council	(1) Calls upon Israel to facilitate the return of the new refugees; (2) Calls upon Israel to ensure the safety, welfare and security of the inhabitants of the Occupied Areas.
2	2252 (ES-V)	4 July 1967	General Assembly	"Welcomes with great satisfaction" Security Council Resolution No. 237 (1967) (No. 1, above).
3	2253 (ES-V)	4 July 1967	General Assembly	(1) Declares the Israeli Annexation of Jerusalem "invalid"; (2) Calls upon Israel to "rescind all measures already taken" and "to desist forthwith from taking any action which would alter the status of Jerusalem".
4	2254 (ES-V)	14 July 1967	General Assembly	(1) "Reiterates" its Resolution 2253 (ES-V) (No. 3, above) (2) "Deplores the failure of Israel to implement" it.
5	240 (1967)	25 October 1967	Security Council	"Reaffirms the necessity of the strict observance of the cease-fire".
6	242 (1967)	22 November 1967	Security Council	Calls for withdrawal of Israeli forces from the Occupied Territories, and for political settlement.
7	2341 (XXII)	19 December 1967	General Assembly	PART A: On Old Refugees:—Reaffirms past resolutions. PART B: On New Refugees:—Reaffirms Resolution 2252 (ES-V) (No. 2, above).
8	6 (XXXIV)	27 February 1968	Commission on Human Rights	Reaffirms Nos. 1 & 2, above.
10	250 (1968)	27 April 1968	Security Council	"Calls upon Israel to refrain from holding the military parade in Jerusalem which is contemplated for 2 May 1968".
11	251 (1968)	2 May 1968	Security Council	"Deeply deplores" Israel's "disregard of the unanimous decision adopted by the Council" in No. 10, above.
12		7 May 1968	International Conference on Human Rights	(1) Reaffirms Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4, & 8, above; (2) "Requests the General Assembly to appoint a special committee to investigate violations of human rights in the territories occupied by Israel and to report thereon."
13	252 (1968)	21 May 1968	Security Council	"Deplores the failure of Israel to comply with" Nos. 3 & 4, above.
14	1336 (XLIV)	31 May 1968	Economic & Social Council	(1) "Recalls" No. 12, above. (2) "Endorses" No. 8, above.
15	256 (1968)	16 August 1968	Security Council	(1) "Reaffirms" No. 9, above; (2) "Condemns" Israel for its recent military attacks.
16	258 (1968)	18 September 1968	Security Council	Reaffirms No. 6, above.
17	259 (1968)	28 September 1968	Security Council	(1) "Recalls" No. 1, above; (2) "Deplores the delay in the implementation" thereof; (3) "Requests the Secretary-General urgently to dispatch a special representative to the Arab territories under military occupation by Israel"; (4) "Requests the Government of Israel to receive the Special Representative of the Secretary-General".



## APPENDIX II

Control of the press in the occupied territories is no longer a matter of conjecture. The statement below is from an article by one of the editors of *Ha'aretz*, written on 21 February 1969, and is one of a number of such reports.

Officers of the secret police asked a correspondent from *Ha'aretz* to accompany them to a police station in Bethlehem. The officer in charge there advised him not to go near the jail where some girls, Arab students, were being detained. The following morning the sergeant in charge of the Ramallah police station, in an encounter with the same correspondent and an Associated Press photographer, was somewhat less polite. The two men were arrested when accidentally they happened to pass during the removal of striking students from a school yard. The sergeant threatened them with bodily harm when, at his request, they entered a police vehicle. His anger was occasioned by a question asked by the newsmen concerning the reason for their arrest. He informed them: "Here (in Ramallah) you are not in Israel. Here I can put you in jail for a few months if you so much as dare to open your mouths." A half hour passed when the military governor and the officer in charge came in to apologize, but nonetheless confiscated the photographer's film on the grounds that "taking pictures of security forces while they are performing their duty is forbidden."

The newsmen were prevented from closely observing the rest of the evacuation of the school. Nevertheless, they did see the security forces rush the school and forcibly evict the students. They also saw one of the teachers leave the school with blood running from a head wound. The security forces would not permit them to learn the causes of her wound.

(*Ha'aretz*, 21 February 1969, Page 2.)

## APPENDIX III

The implementation of what appears to be Israeli policy with respect to Gaza was the subject of a lengthy article by Uri Avneri, an independent member of the Knesset. The following is an extract of the article in translation.

Exactly a year ago, I asked a high-ranking official in the Ministry of Labor: "Why are they paying members of the emergency labor force [*Avodot Dahak*] in Gaza a lower wage than those in the West Bank who, in turn, are paid less than laborers in Israel?" (Emergency laborers are employed as part of a government program to curb unemployment.) I informed him at that time that I had talked with men paving a street in the southern part of the country, "laborers from Gaza and Hebron working together. I found that the men from Gaza were receiving a 'starvation wage.'" This means, quite literally, that those from Hebron (as opposed to those from Gaza) who do the same work at the same place earn a more reasonable wage.

The answer of the Labor Ministry official was candid: "This is the official policy."

This policy dictates the starvation of the Gaza Strip. It means making life there more difficult than it is already. Its purpose is to force the population of Gaza, in particular the refugees, to leave the Strip—to leave for Transjordan or, at least, to the West Bank. Thus the authorities are giving monetary incentives to the Gaza inhabitants to migrate to the West Bank and live, for example, at the Jericho refugee camp which is virtually empty.

This policy has had practical results. A few thousand have left the Gaza Strip, many to Transjordan (as in the case of the young lady who participated in the attack on the E1-A1 airliner in Zurich). There (in Transjordan) they have been transformed into determined enemies of Israel, into a revolutionary and activist element, into the vanguards of an Army of sabotage similar to that which has emerged in Gaza.

Those residing in the West Bank are carrying out similar activities.

But those who left Gaza are few in number. The demographic picture has not changed. When Jordan closed the bridges in the face of those who planned to leave, the exodus stopped.

Thus the Gaza population stayed put—and starvation stayed with them, accompanied by hatred and, ultimately, terrorism.

Here the intelligent person may ask: Who embarked upon this incredible policy? Who are the fools who drafted it?



Those who took this decision are the highest authority in the State—the Government of Israel. Why? For what purpose?

The answer is very simple: to empty the Gaza Strip of as much of its population as possible.

Why? To facilitate the annexation of the Gaza Strip to Israel.

(*Ha'olam Hazei*, 26 February 1969, Page 9)